

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A sound muffling device comprising:  
a body having a substantially closed end and a  
substantially open end, wherein the substantially closed  
end has at least one opening, and wherein the  
substantially open end has a size and contour such that  
10 the substantially open end is adapted to be placed over a  
mouth of a user while engaging a face of the user to form  
an effective sound seal around the mouth;  
a sound wave guidance tube, wherein the sound wave  
guidance tube has a first end connected to the  
15 substantially closed end of the body, and wherein an  
opening of the sound wave guidance tube and an opening in  
the substantially closed end of the body are  
substantially matched to allow sound waves to pass from  
the body into the sound wave guidance tube; and  
20 an adapter for connecting a second end of the sound  
wave guidance tube to an exterior case of a portable  
phone in close proximity to a microphone on the portable  
phone.
- 25 2. The device of claim 1 further comprising:  
an ear cover attached to the body, wherein the ear  
cover extends to substantially cover an ear of the user  
in order to muffle sound entering the ear.
- 30 3. The device of claim 1 wherein the adapter comprises  
a suction cup for attaching the second end of the sound  
wave guidance tube.

4. A sound muffling device comprising:

5 a body having a substantially closed end and a substantially open end, wherein the substantially closed end has at least one opening, and wherein the substantially open end has a size and contour such that the substantially open end is adapted to be placed over a mouth of a user while engaging a face of the user to form an effective sound seal around the mouth;

10 a microphone attached to the body, wherein the microphone generates an output electrical signal responsive to sound waves from a voice of the user;

an electrical conductor for carrying the generated output signal from the microphone; and

15 an adapter for connecting the electrical conductor to an electrical contact on a portable phone such that the microphone acts as an exterior microphone for the portable phone.

20 5. The device of claim 4 further comprising:

an ear cover attached to the body, wherein the ear cover extends to substantially cover an ear of the user in order to muffle sound entering the ear.

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6. A method for using a distributed data processing system, the method comprising:

receiving a seat reservation for a passenger on a transport vehicle;

5 determining whether to reserve a sound muffling device for the passenger, wherein the sound muffling device is adapted to couple to a portable phone; and

10 in response to a positive determination to reserve a sound muffling device for the passenger, reserving a sound muffling device for the passenger.

15 7. The method of claim 6 wherein the sound muffling device has a body having a substantially closed end and a substantially open end, wherein the substantially closed end has at least one opening, and wherein the substantially open end has a size and contour such that the substantially open end is adapted to be placed over a mouth of a user while engaging a face of the user to form an effective sound seal around the mouth.

20 8. The method of claim 6 further comprising:

charging the passenger a fee for use of the sound muffling device.

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9. A system for using a distributed data processing system, the system comprising:

receiving means for receiving a seat reservation for a passenger on a transport vehicle;

5 determining means for determining whether to reserve a sound muffling device for the passenger, wherein the sound muffling device is adapted to couple to a portable phone; and

10 reserving means for reserving, in response to a positive determination to reserve a sound muffling device for the passenger, a sound muffling device for the passenger.

15 10. The system of claim 9 wherein the sound muffling device has a body having a substantially closed end and a substantially open end, wherein the substantially closed end has at least one opening, and wherein the substantially open end has a size and contour such that the substantially open end is adapted to be placed over a mouth of a user while engaging a face of the user to form an effective sound seal around the mouth.

20 11. The system of claim 9 further comprising:

25 charging means for charging the passenger a fee for use of the sound muffling device.

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12. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for use in a data processing system, the computer program product comprising:

instructions for receiving a seat reservation for a passenger on a transport vehicle;

instructions for determining whether to reserve a sound muffling device for the passenger, wherein the sound muffling device is adapted to couple to a portable phone; and

instructions for reserving, in response to a positive determination to reserve a sound muffling device for the passenger, a sound muffling device for the passenger.

13. The computer program product of claim 12 wherein the sound muffling device has a body having a substantially closed end and a substantially open end, wherein the substantially closed end has at least one opening, and wherein the substantially open end has a size and contour such that the substantially open end is adapted to be placed over a mouth of a user while engaging a face of the user to form an effective sound seal around the mouth.

14. The computer program product of claim 12 further comprising:

instructions for charging the passenger a fee for use of the sound muffling device.